



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Church
of Central Square
A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

The Rev. Margaret Hart, Minister
Andrea Abbott, Lay Speaker
Janie Garlow, President
Rita Thornton, Director of Music

668-1268
635-7122
668-1631
699-4824

Our church building is handicapped accessible.

Routes 49 West & 11, Post Office Box 429, Central Square, New York 13036 Phone: 668-6821

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the First Universalist Society of Central Square is to be a welcoming, diverse congregation, which values spiritual growth and service to the local and world community.

JANUARY 2009

MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

Dear members and friends,

Many of you have already heard about my recent fall, in which I broke my right ankle. As a result, my mobility is even more limited than it was, as I can't even drive! Needless to say, I will be at home a lot more during the time I have a cast on (which I am told will be for about 6 weeks). I am still hoping to lead worship, as scheduled, on January 18. I am also hoping to have a Membership Conversation in January to explore with people what membership entails. I am thinking about scheduling it after church on January 18 or 25, for about an hour (you could get coffee and then join the conversation). If you are at all interested in joining the church, I would love to talk with you. Also let me know if either or both of these dates would work for you. I would like to know in advance so I can arrange childcare as needed. Please do call me (439-8375) or e-mail me (marghart@a-znet.com). Thanks.

It seems like there must be some lesson in being so limited physically at this time, so I am trying to see it philosophically. As I have been making New Year's resolutions, I realize that they are slanted toward the things which renew me spiritually and require little physical exertion. May all our resolutions be helpful to us, to our families, and to our communities, that we may grow into a Beloved Community in this new year.

With love and respect,
The Rev. Margaret Hart

THERE'S STILL TIME TO GIVE

Guest at Your Table boxes are still available at church, along with Stories of Hope and printed descriptions of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Please take one home, if you haven't yet, and put your donations in to support the work of the UUSC. Boxes and donations will be returned to church on January 18. Your donation may be used toward a UUSC membership as follows: Regular, \$40 per person; Youth/student, \$10; Senior, \$20; Dual regular, \$75. All individual and family unrestricted contributions of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched dollar for dollar by the UU congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. Your generosity is appreciated.

Note: Please have items for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on SATURDAY, JANUARY 31. Bob would be grateful if everyone would have articles to him as soon as possible and not wait until the last minute. His address is 29 Grove Street, Baldwinsville, NY 13027-2332; his telephone number is 635-5294; his e-mail address is rhaskell@twcny.rr.com

GREEN MINUTE: THE BIG SWITCH

On February 18, television broadcasters will transition completely from analog to digital broadcasting, meaning that any TV not equipped to receive digital broadcasts won't get a signal. This frees up valuable airwaves for other uses, including public safety. However, the significant downside is that the switch is expected to send millions of analog television sets containing toxic components such as lead-filled cathode-ray tubes (CRT) to landfills as people mistakenly assume they'll have to toss their old TV sets and buy new flat-screen models. Fortunately you do have some options.

If you have an older cube-shaped CRT TV set at home it will likely do just fine if you subscribe to satellite or cable service. If you use an antenna, the over-the-air signals may cease after the switch. It still can be easy and cheap to fix this problem and to keep using your set. If your TV set was made after 2003 it may have a built-in digital receiver. Look for labels that say something such as "integrated digital tuner" or "digital receiver built-in." If your set isn't equipped with a digital tuner, visit www.dtv.gov to receive \$40 in government coupons to purchase a converter. The converters usually range in price from \$50 to \$75, and be sure to look for an Energy Star converter box so you're getting the most efficient model possible. In terms of energy efficiency, your old TV set does as well or better than comparable flat-screen models, so you won't be saving much energy by making the switch. Your greenest possible option is to keep your old CRT TV set as long as possible, thus preventing more resources and energy from being used to make a new TV set.

When you do decide to get a new TV set, avoid energy-hog plasma televisions. The average plasma TV uses more energy per year than a refrigerator! Also, when it comes to TV sets, size matters. If you are swapping your old 26-inch set for a 52-inch LCD TV set you're not going to save energy. Your most efficient option is an LCD TV set less than 42 inches. Go to <http://reviews.cnet.com/tv-power-consumption> to find a TV set with the best energy rating.

Your old TV set has toxic innards, and to be sure that it doesn't end up clogging up a landfill with leaking hazardous substances you should check with your county's waste recycling office to see if it is having a special drop-off day and what it intends to do with the TV sets it collects. If it does not have a special program or day, ask what it intends to do with discarded TV sets. Many electronics manufacturers have sites around the country where they will accept sets for recycling, but be careful – make sure that they are not an irresponsible recycler by sending the old electronics to developing countries such as China, where organizations such as Basel Action Network (BAN) have reported seeing workers sort and dismantle toxic electronics by hand, unprotected. Go to www.ban.org/pledge.html to find recyclers that have pledged not to export e-waste and to recycle it responsibly.

In short, as their monetary prices come down, flat-screen TV sets don't have to come at a steep cost to the Earth. Keep your old TV set for as long as you can, and when you need a new one, encourage new green technology by buying green.

— Social Justice Committee's Green Team

SPIRITUAL DISCUSSION GROUP

Come join us at our spiritual discussion group!

Our next meeting will be Friday, January 16th, at 7 p.m.

Our topic of discussion will be

"How can we help ourselves and each other in spiritual growth for the new year?"

We can start here and see where it leads us.

The last meeting on the 12th of December was a lot of fun. We started by discussing our thoughts and feelings about the holiday season and before long we were discussing the nature of dreams and "magic" and some of our own personal spiritual awakenings. Many of us felt the most spiritual experience of the Christmas and holiday season to be felt when we gathered in love with family and friends. It's amazing how spiritual it can be just to join in love with others and feel the oneness of being together.

For more information, please contact John or Pam Landers at 458-5615 or on the web at appleheartsjp@aol.com

— John and Pam Landers

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

My Dear Friends,

The wheel has turned full circle again, bringing us to another New Year. This is a time for change. We plan change with our New Year's resolutions, and then there is the unexpected. This past month has been a time of unexpected changes at church. Ronna Schindler has resigned as our religious education coordinator and teacher. Kurt Schindler has resigned his membership as of December 31. Both Kurt and Ronna have been invaluable members to our church community. We will miss them dearly.

Ronna was the religious education teacher for the younger children for 12 years. Currently, we are in the process of re-organizing our RE program. During this interim, childcare will be available on Sundays. Thank you in advance for your patience and any assistance you may offer. I am delighted to report that the Rev. Libbie Stoddard has come to our aid with her knowledge and experience in RE curriculum. If anyone would like to work with Libbie, please let Winfield Ihlow, Religious Education Committee chairperson, or me know. We welcome Libbie's participation.

The Rev. Margaret Hart has broken her ankle and will be home-bound for a few weeks. Margaret reports that she is available by phone and e-mail, and has even scheduled a couple of meetings at her home. I know she would enjoy your cards and well-wishes for a speedy recovery. Her new address is: 23 Collins Terrace, Central Square, NY 13036.

In times of big change, it's good to be patient. Life is not always predictable, easy or peaceful. Life can be demanding. I remind myself of the bigger picture, the health of our church and the necessity to keep this liberal, inclusive faith alive. Let us not be divisive but move forward together in strength, love and unity in 2009. I wish Kurt and Ronna the best life has to offer on their continued spiritual journeys. May our paths cross many times. I wish Margaret a speedy recovery. I wish a smooth transition in re-organizing our RE program and, most of all, I wish you a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR filled with many blessings!

Thank you for your goodness,

— Janie

WHAT'S NEW WITH THE UU CIRCLE? DO I NEED TO BELONG? WHAT EXACTLY DO THEY DO?

There are many new faces at church and during coffee hour. That means that there are many people who have not been involved in UU Circle activities and have questions about what the Circle does. The purpose of the UU Circle is to provide social activities as well as to raise funds for the church. We have potlucks to keep us connected, have made homemade ice cream from scratch, had field trips to dig Herkimer diamonds and outings to various kinds of entertainment. If you went to the Rummage Sale or the Service and Merchandise Auction, you may know that they were also planned by the UU Circle, but put on with many, many helping hands from everyone in the church.

You may have wondered if you needed to be a member to come to activities or you may have wondered if you needed to be a church member. We have no membership. All activities are for everyone to enjoy. You don't need to be a church member to join in

either. All of our friends are invited. The UU Circle does have a committee that plans the events, and our meetings are also open to everyone. So, please consider coming to the next meeting. We welcome input and ideas from everyone. It helps to make our events fun and successful when we know what everyone is interested in. Meetings will be announced in church, and notices of them put into the newsletter. Most people who have belonged to the church for a while will be able to tell you about the UU Circle.

Each year, the UU Circle has a meeting to vote for new officers. We will be filling the position as president that Kurt Schindler has left as well as other positions that are open. While we are organizing for the coming year, UU Circle activities will continue. There will be a potluck after church late in January, and an Un-Birthday party is planned for February. The Holistic Wellness Fair is scheduled for Saturday, March 21st, and is being organized by Ginny Glahn. We hope that you can join us for fellowship and fun.

— Ann Peterson, UU Circle secretary treasurer

SPLINTERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

President Janie Garlow told those present that the Rev. Margaret Hart had fallen and broken her right ankle. Mrs. Garlow said that the minister would be home-bound for a few weeks and would appreciate receiving cards. The president said Mrs. Hart still hoped to lead the morning service on Sunday, January 18, and to conduct a membership orientation on January 18 or 25.

Trustee Winfield Ihlow reminded members that Ronna Schindler had resigned as religious education coordinator and teacher and that Kurt Schindler had resigned as religious education teacher. Thus, he said, the church needed new religious education leaders. He said that he had spoken briefly with the Rev. Libbie Stoddard, minister emerita, about the re-organization of the program and would confer further with her.

Trustee Ann Peterson, secretary-treasurer of the UU Circle, said the Circle was planning a potluck luncheon and annual meeting late in January and an Un-Birthday Party in February.

Treasurer Chester Perkins said that December had been an expensive month for the church. He said that the church had paid \$430 toward its snow removal contract, had paid \$500 to the Unitarian Universalist Association and \$500 to the St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District as part of the church's "Fair Share," had paid \$409 for building insurance and had given \$175 in Christmas gifts to staff members. Mr. Perkins said that the church had been helped financially during the month by a contribution of \$2,500 from the UU Circle.

Mr. Perkins proposed that the church conduct this year's stewardship campaign during March, to which board members indicated their agreement. President Garlow and Treasurer Perkins said that they hoped to present plans for the campaign at the next monthly board meeting on Sunday, January 25.

The board agreed that letters of gratitude should be sent to Betty Figie for providing two front-door wreaths, to Ronna Schindler for service as religious education coordinator and teacher and to Kurt Schindler for service as religious education teacher.

It was pointed out that there was a need for people to volunteer to host the social period that takes place after the service on Sunday mornings by providing refreshments. It was also stated that there was a need for volunteers to act as greeters at the front door of the church for Sunday morning services. The desirability of also having volunteers to serve as greeters at the side door stairway and at the elevator on Sunday mornings was expressed.

Trustee Peterson said that she had begun to collect data so that the postal and e-mail addresses of the members could be updated. Trustee Arne Hook plans to compile a database with the updated information.

Trustee Hook said it had been decided not to apply to the New York State Convention of Universalists for funds for a new sound system because such money would be provided only as a loan and not as a grant to the church. He said it was felt that the church could not afford to take out a loan at this time.

COFFEE AND CHAT

Women and men of the church will gather for Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread on Route 31 in Clay at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 21.

All are welcome to join in casual conversation and to enjoy coffee or tea and other goodies.

The women's and men's groups meet separately. For information about the women's group, you may contact Nancy Haskell. For information about the men's group, you may contact Chet Perkins.

FAIR SHARE APPEAL

The Fair Share is the contribution our congregation is asked to give each fiscal year to the St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District (SLUUD) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) based upon

the number of members in our congregation.

This year's combined contribution is about \$75 per member.

These contributions finance programs, services and resources that directly benefit and strengthen our congregation and the Unitarian Universalist movement as a whole.

Our congregation has a line item in our budget which covers only about 25 percent of this contribution. Each year we try to pay our Fair Share in full. The last couple of years we have not come close to reaching that goal. Wouldn't it be great to meet the goal? If you are able, we are asking members to pay their amount. This would help us reach the goal. Please write a check for \$75 to the church and write "Fair Share" in the memo. For more information, call Chet Perkins at 668-6719.

BE A PART OF UNIRONDAK THIS SUMMER — AS A CAMPER OR A STAFF MEMBER

Interested in being a camper?

Spending time at Unirondack over the summer is an experience like no other. Our highly skilled and talented staff turn our beautiful niche in the Adirondack Mountains into the home of a loving and affirming community where young people can collectively practice Unitarian Universalist values. We offer week-long sessions that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of the age group attending. Our staff and volunteer resource people offer workshops and activities throughout the day that blend education, creativity, skill-building and silliness.

Surrounded by woods, a lake of unsurpassed beauty, an athletic field that stretches the length of the camp, and rustic Adirondack style buildings, campers can't help but be inspired to connect with the web of life and the physical, mental and spiritual challenges that camp offers. The Unirondack leadership is dedicated to offering a unique outdoor experience that often leaves campers feeling it was the best time of their lives.

Making close friends and actively being part of the community that they build, young people who attend for the first time as Emerson (grades 4-6) or Barton (grades 4-9) campers often become lifelong "Unirondackers" attending high-school sessions when they get older, family camp and work weekends.

Unirondack is a popular place and we often have waiting lists, so please register early. Registration forms and more details can be found at www.unirondack.org

Do you want to work at camp?

Unirondack is a special place to work and help shape the lives of young people. Our staff members are often surprised at the intensity and richness of their experience at camp, how much they personally learn and grow as we work together to deepen our understanding of the needs of campers and to develop programs that are well planned and substantial.

If you are eager to work in a close-knit community whose mission is to broaden and deepen the lives of young people, Unirondack might be the place for you. Most staff members must be at least 18 years old to be counselors and at least 16 to be on kitchen or maintenance crews. Being a certified lifeguard or having a specialized skill that can contribute to a positive experience for campers is always a plus. In addition to counselor and crew positions we are also looking for people interested in being our waterfront director, cook and art shop director.

Interested applicants should visit our website (www.unirondack.org) and explore our summer employment page. On our website applicants can download an application form, fill it out and e-mail/mail it back to the directors at director@unirondack.org or at our off-season address:

Unirondack, Post Office Box 795, Nyack, NY 10960

— Darren Cosgrove, co-director

WHERE ARE YOU NOW? TRYING TO KEEP US CONNECTED

Many of you have given us your change of home address, phone number and e-mail addresses.

If you have not had a chance to give us those changes, the legal pad and the last church directory are still on the table in the East Room.

If all of your information is just the same, please let us know that, too.

If it is easier for you, you can just e-mail me any changes at the following e-mail address:
abpeterson@localnet.com.

We will be making a supplement listing all of the updates so that communication will go a bit smoother.

Thanks to all of you for your help.

— Ann Peterson, trustee, Executive Board

IF IT'S SNOWING ...

To find out if church services will be held on a Sunday morning when winter weather is raging, you may call:

Janie Garlow at 436-2238, or

Chet Perkins at 668-6719.

The decision will be made by 8:30 a.m.

Ann Peterson has also made arrangements for cancellations to be broadcast over WSYR television and WSYR radio.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.

CALENDAR

January

- 10 – 10 a.m. to noon, Extended choir practice.
- 11 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. John Anderson of Oswego, guest speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 16 – 7 p.m., Spiritual Discussion Group.
- 17 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Workshop on Emergency Preparedness Training for Congregations, led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker.
- 18 – 9 a.m., Religious Education Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Margaret Hart, with focus on UU principle number 1. Guest at Your Table boxes and donations to the UUSC are returned. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 21 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.
- 23 – 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group.
- 25 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education.

February

- 1 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Elizabeth Williams, guest speaker. Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 8 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 14 – 10 a.m. to noon, Dream workshop led by Arne Hook. Extended choir practice.
- 15 – 9 a.m., Religious Education Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Margaret Hart. Evolution Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 18 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.
- 22 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker, with focus on UU principle number 2. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 28 – 10 a.m. to noon, Dream workshop led by Arne Hook.

March

- 1 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Guest speaker. Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 8 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. Association Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 14 – 10 a.m. to noon, Extended choir practice.
- 15 – 9 a.m., Religious Education Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Margaret Hart, with focus on UU principle number 3. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 18 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.
- 29 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker, with focus on UU principle number 4. 11 a.m., Religious education.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.